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Denis Bocquet

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Challenges to Urbanity in Contemporary Mediterranean Metropolises
New Urban Forms, Dynamics, Boundaries and Tensions

Denis Bocquet

Many things have changed over the last three decades in Mediterranean metropolises, and globalization and its local declensions have had profound effects not only on their spatial structure but also on their social functioning and on the institutional practices of their planning and governance. Such new spatial regimes have transformed metropolises of the Mediterranean region and invite a revision of the general perception of such cities. The changes reflected in these cities suggest addressing cities in other regions of the world with new research perspectives, as what is happening might have echoes in other geographical contexts. Globalization has been accompanied by the emergence of challenges to what was typically perceived as the traditional form of Mediterranean urbanity — a historically, culturally, and anthropologically constructed combination of urban form, urban governance, and urban lifestyle, and to its values. This process has sometimes been violent, inducing rapid transformation not only of urban morphology but also of the general organization of urban life at various scales, from the neighborhood to the street and the family. It has also been accompanied by the invention of new architectural and urban forms that have challenged the very Mediterranean nature of such cities.

But urban growth in previous periods, such as the 1950s and 1960s, had surely already shaken tradition, with urban sprawl, illegal urbanism, large social housing projects, and low-quality concrete peripheries or the traumatic consequences for urbanity of the intrusion of motorized mobility into historical cities: the Mediterranean did not enter the current phase of globalization in an unaltered, sleepy urban form (which, moreover, is perfectly mythical). Mediterranean cities are the result of previous globalizations, from Neolithic times to the era of industrialization, and are not merely the product of the simple application of ancient and medieval urban ideals on space. Mediterranean cities, in their diversity, are complex entities and can't be reduced to a static category or type. With globalization, boundaries between Mediterranean city regions and their hinterlands, or even the world, as well as internal boundaries within cities, have been redefined once again, a phenomenon that invites reflection on the possible value of the Mediterranean as a spatial model for the understanding of contemporary global interactions.

As they tend to challenge conventional boundaries, forms, and social configurations, recent trends in the development of Mediterranean metropolises do indeed deserve specific attention. They also illustrate the necessity of deconstructing dichotomies pertaining to North/South and East/West shifts: Mediterranean metropolises are "in between" in many regards, and their understanding might help refine categories. Just as historians have illustrated how the history of Mediterranean cities between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been more complex than that of a modernity exported from West and North to East and South (Lafi 2005), Mediterranean urban geography today has to integrate new

methods and perspectives. In other words, metropolitanization in the age of globalization constitutes a kind of new frontier for Mediterranean urban geography (Courtot 2001). But this process of reintroducing the Mediterranean on the global urban scene must not itself create unexamined categories, among which the Mediterranean metropolis itself might be the most delicate. This reintroduction of the Mediterranean must indeed be built on local micro-geographies and on a reflection on the articulation between this local dimension and the global one in different contexts, and in no way on new ontological visions on the Mediterranean nature of cities of the Mediterranean region. Even if the cities of the region do share many common historical, morphological, social, and anthropological features, they cannot be the object of the construction of a single category.

But they can be the subjects instead of a focused analysis based on a variety of questions. Not all cities of the region are affected in the same way by all questions posed to contemporary metropolises, but on the basis of a certain number of features they have in common, a Mediterranean entry might have a relative pertinence. The myth of Mediterranean unity having long been deconstructed, and warnings about a homogenizing Mediterranean approach heard (Herzfeld 2005: Horden 2005), it might be the time to come back to Mediterranean cities with the aim of addressing contemporary stakes. As for a possible Mediterranean unity, which anthropologists have long been seeking in common rural traditions (Albera 2006, Albera and Tozy 2005), it has never had more relevance, outside of colonial ideological elaborations, for the question of cities. The history of the Mediterranean since Braudel is more one of blocs of civilizations than of convergences. The geographical invention of the Mediterranean itself has, since Braudel, been critically discussed (Deprest 2002). So the question today is not of a possible Mediterranean ontology but rather of a pragmatic approach to a region that shares common characteristics — among which the high value given to urbanity is central — and is subjected to some common global transformations that constitute real challenges to the very nature of this urbanity. It is also the pertinent approach to cities in terms of social sciences (Sant Cassia and Schäfer 2005), at a time when the relationship to culture has been reconceptualized (Gupta and Ferguson 1992) and common narratives on the East/West relationship are being revisited (Mallette 2010).

Metropolises have been the object, during the last fifteen years, of growing interest among the scholarly community. Their fast transformation constitutes, for researchers, both a materialization of globalization and a symbol of changing equilibria in the world order. Metropolises are also seen as places where the stakes of the relationship between global trends, space, and society are most legible and their effects, both physical and social, for better or worse, most spectacular. Logically, cities of the emerging world, those experiencing the fastest transformations, have been at the center of this focus, and from Shanghai to Mumbai, or Dubai to Rio, new paradigms about metropolitan growth, dynamism, and governance have been fashioned (Lorrain 2011). The emergence of such new research objects was also an opportunity to answer calls for an address of the persisting Eurocentrism affecting academia, and indeed, studies of urban issues became more international and truly multicultural, with a critically engaged examination of the roots of globalization and the new forms of urban life that result.

Big cities of the emerging world, characterized by growing social and spatial injustices (Brenner 1997, Harvey 2006), have been read in light of the relationship between urbanization, urbanity, globalization, and local governance (Eade and Mele 2011). They have become objects of debate about the social nature of cities and the capacity of global capitalism to produce harmonious forms of urban development. Here again, the main focus has been placed on cities like Lagos, Mexico City, or Jakarta. The result, for cities of the Mediterranean region, has been a certain marginalization in research. Of course there was a reason for that: our generation is witnessing the development of what was once called the Third World, and scholarly interest in the analysis of the effects of this huge phenomenon on urban spaces and societies is more than legitimate. And no one doubts that the relative position of Mediterranean cities in this new world has decreased: the world economy now has other cores: skyscrapers are higher in Kuala Lumpur than in Cairo, gated-communities are more gated in Capetown than in Istanbul, and the condition of slums is probably worse in Delhi than in Naples.

Mediterranean cities had already experienced such economic, cultural (and academic) shifts in history, from the development of the Atlantic world to the industrialization of Europe, while retaining a central position in reflections on the nature of urbanity. When Lisbon and then Paris, London, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles, and Tokyo became world metropolises, cities of the Mediterranean region, for their historical richness, retained a central position in judgments on what is a city and for understanding how such social and spatial constructions work. Urbanity as a value has always been marked by a certain Mediterranean nostalgia, and historians have illustrated how Mediterranean metropolises have constituted central paradigms in the evaluation

of what makes a city urban in different periods (Ilbert et al. 2000). It is still the case in many respects, even if today cities of the region can seem marginal compared to Hong Kong or Singapore and are sometimes known more for their traces of the past than for the innovations they bring to the international urban scene. I argue in this chapter that in present Mediterranean metropolises, many important phenomena remain to be read, and that their study might contribute to the understanding of the stakes of urbanity at a much larger scale.

The Complex Heritage of Illegal Urbanism

One of the first common features of Mediterranean cities that comes to mind in the context of a general trend toward urbanization, which has been particularly spectacular on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, is that of littoralization (Côte and Joannon 1999). In Mediterranean countries, an always growing share of the population tends to live not only in cities but also in larger cities of the coast or within coastal regions. This phenomenon has roots in the history of the Mediterranean (and probably of humankind in general) since ancient times, but more specifically in the rural exodus leading to massive urbanization in the nineteenth century. But since the 1970s, the trend toward littoralization has increased, with the result of the creation of large coastal urban regions, which have changed the nature of metropolises. There is in France the example of the Nice-Toulon-Marseilles-Montpellier-Perpignan conurbation (Ferrier 1993), but this reality is even more spectacular on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, whose (mostly) coastal cities have been deeply transformed by a mass rural-urban migration of which international migrations are only a partial echo. Urban growth since the middle of the twentieth century has created a series of Mediterranean metropolises with multimillion populations, from Athens (Leontidou 1990) to Cairo (Abu-Lughod 2004), and from Beirut (Verdeil 2010) to Istanbul (Pérouse 2000), Algiers, and Tripoli. Metropolises of the northern shore, except maybe Barcelona, Rome, and Athens, have long been overshadowed in terms of inhabitants, and cities like Marseilles, Genoa, Naples, Palermo, and Thessaloniki have become more regional than global metropolises. A city like Istanbul grew from 1 million in 1950 to 14 million in 2012, and Cairo expanded from 700,000 circa 1920 to about 17 million in 2010.

What most of these cities share is a heritage of architecture and planning from the 1950s to the 1980s, a mix of urban sprawl, urbanization of former rural surroundings, more or less articulated informal settlements, neighborhoods of social housing, and low-quality forms of housing for the middle classes. They also share the fact of having been massively subjected to the invasion of cars into the historical urban fabric, a traumatic process that has deeply affected not only the general functioning of cities but also the form of Mediterranean urbanity that they materialized. And indeed, reclaiming urban space from cars has been one of the stakes of the rediscovery of urbanity in many Mediterranean cities during the last few decades. Metropolises of the Mediterranean also share (except maybe for France) a long heritage of "illegal" or "informal" architecture and urbanism. We are entering an era in which the consideration given to such urban forms is changing, both in the scholarly community and in governance and planning practices. The Mediterranean might be a kind of laboratory of urban change in addressing the heritage of illegal planning — which we now know had little to do with the informal dimension and often occurred just outside of the official planning system. Scholarly criticism of perceptions of the phenomenon based on a legalistic reading is now widespread; illegal urbanism can no longer be assessed in terms of simple dichotomies between the formal and the informal, or the planned and the spontaneous (Bocquet and De Pieri 2005).

That the illegal dimension has always been part of a more complex social and spatial system is now recognized, as part of an evolution of ideas in which studies about Mediterranean metropolises have been instrumental. Illegal urbanism, which has long been the object of a scholarly blindness (Destro 2010), is now being subjected to a truly critical approach. In the case of Italy, for example, urban planning has long been seen by scholars as a way of controlling speculation and the grip of landowners on the city. For ideological reasons, and the belief in the political virtues of the master plan, this Marxist vision of planning has delayed a more comprehensive approach to urban realities. But changed perspectives are now clearly at work (Zanfi 2008). In Rome since the 2000s, official planning does take into account the urban reality as it is, and not as it should be (without the dimension of illegal urbanism — entire blocks in some cases), and the new master plan has been designed in a more dynamic negotiation with landowners and investors (Cellamare 2010), at the cost sometimes of ambiguous compromises, but at least from a more realistic vision of the city and its dynamics of transformation. Even in Naples, where conventional attitudes of planners and municipal rulers toward the illegal city have lasted longer, things are changing, as in Palermo (Maccaglia 2009).

In this Italian context, the practice of amnesties (*condoni edilizi*) by the various Berlusconi governments since the 1990s has also obliged municipalities to take this newly legal reality into account (and has helped the ruling party expand its political clientele). On the academic scene, studies about Italy have also contributed to illustrate how illegal and formerly illegal neighborhoods also have a soul (De Pieri 2010). Studies about Athens and Istanbul, two metropolises in which urban growth has long largely happened outside of the framework of the master plan, also illustrate how these processes were highly socialized, and how spontaneity was inserted into a strong network of social control. Studies about the *Gecekondu* neighborhoods of Istanbul emphasize the role of small entrepreneurs within the real-estate sector, as well as the insertion of the population into networks of local political patronage (Pérouse 2004, Esen and Lang 2007). This change of perception, as in Italy or Greece, is accompanied by the invention of new planning methods within municipal offices (Içduygu

2004). As in Rome, new processes of negotiation, both with inhabitants and entrepreneurs or investors, are progressively inserted into planning procedures (Gülöksüz 2002). In Beirut, studies have shown how illegal urbanism was in fact always part of a very socialized process, with informal negotiations between authorities and investors or inhabitants, or even the informal intervention of professional planners for the planning of what has long been considered unplanned (Fawaz 2005). In the Mediterranean, beyond the great typological differences between metropolises affected by the heritage of illegal urbanism, new planning methods seem to be at work, or at least there appears to be a new perspective on the relationship between planning and the actual evolution of the built environment — fewer norms, rules, and illusions about their implementation, but also more strategic planning and big projects, sometimes seen as partial substitutes for planning (Carrière 2002). But these new solutions, just like the complex urban growth of the previous period, also constitute new challenges to the Mediterranean form of urbanity: they produce a new urban morphology, which doesn't necessarily relate either to the existing city or to the spirit it managed to continue embodying despite previous traumatic urban changes.

New Morphological Challenges to Mediterranean Urbanity

Urban sprawl is not new in Mediterranean metropolises, but the phenomenon recently acquired a new face (Munoz 2003, De Rossi 1999). During the last two decades, a Mediterranean form of urban decentralization emerged, with the birth of new peripheries, whose relationship with the urban center proves difficult. Of course, the extension of peripheries of the 1980s type continued, with the urbanization of former rural areas around most cities. In a city like Barcelona, this extension even flourished during the real-estate boom of the 1990s, which only ended with the present crisis (Dura-Guimera 2003). But, because they are increasingly further from the city center, these peripheries articulate differently with it, and their existence modifies the Mediterranean metropolitan lifestyle. There are even more cars and long hours in networks of public transportation that always arrive too late to follow the peripheral extensions of the city. The very landscape of Mediterranean cities is also modified by such trends, the transition between city and hinterland being now made of motorways, commercial zones, and endless suburbs. In Rome, the *Agro Romano* is progressively transformed into a vast suburb (Salvaggiulio et al. 2010). In Athens too, sprawling peripheries have completely altered the historical relationship between the city and its hinterland (Chorianopoulos 2010). The same happened in Istanbul (Cakir 2008, Terzi and Bolen 2010). Studies on land-cover indicators suggest that sprawling peripheries are consuming the historical landscape surrounding Mediterranean cities (Salvati 2012). This is true for Rome, but also for Tunis (Weber and Puissant 2003). In most Mediterranean metropolises, more people now live in the peripheries than downtown — major cultural shifts whose consequences for the idea of urbanity and the daily practices of urban living still have to be understood. In contexts where the pattern of the compact city was of century-long historical importance, having metropolises develop along motorways and orbital ring roads — with resulting land acquisition and major challenges to existing transportation schemes, as in Rome (Munafo 2010) — also has huge consequences for the idea of the city, on its image, practices, and representations. Sprawled cities are truly a challenge to Mediterranean urbanity (Monclus 1998).

The form of the new peripheries also presents a challenge. In many Mediterranean cities, gated communities were built since the 1990s and are now part of the new metropolitan landscape as well as of the social practices of urban space. This new form of Mediterranean enclosed living is of course in contradiction with many of the anthropological features that defined the essence of cities and urbanity in the region (Munoz 2003). From New Cairo (Abu-Lughod 2004) to the enclaves of villas surrounded by golf courses in many cities of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean (Denis 2006), but also from the numerous gated communities of Istanbul and even Rome or Montpellier, such islands of prosperity separated from the rest of the urban landscape and society have deeply altered, with the adaptation of a model developed for other regions, the traditional proximity between rich and poor in Mediterranean cities and the patterns of communication that formed the very essence of urbanity. Of course segregation has always existed, and one shouldn't have a mythical vision of class coexistence in Mediterranean cities of the past, but now a new form of segregation tends to be materialized by walls and fences, as well as by distance, and people have less chance to meet in the street. This growing uniformity of urban landscapes in the Mediterranean could also lead to what Francesc Munoz calls "urbanalization" (Munoz 2008): a loss of character that would have tremendous effects on the idea of the Mediterranean city and the values it carries.

Such recent trends in Mediterranean metropolises have been accompanied on the other hand by a spectacular downtown renaissance, which saw degraded city centers being renovated, changing the whole image of such neighborhoods and boosting tourism. The model for this form of urban renovation is of course Barcelona, a city that on the occasion of the 1992 Olympic Games both reclaimed its own waterfront and initiated the renovation of its medieval city center (Marshall 2004, Bocquet, De Pieri, Infusino 2006). This initiative had a strong echo in many cities of the Mediterranean, from the renaissance of the medinas of North Africa (Balbo 2012) to the rebuilding of downtown Beirut (Kassab 1997), or from the rebirth of Valencia and Genoa. Urban policies have largely focused on boosting the dynamism of such historical city parts, and a new model was definitely invented in the Mediterranean. The success of such initiatives in terms of urban revitalization (if not necessarily social justice) derived from the conjunction between greater pedestrian access around many major downtown arteries, the rebirth of the downtown prestige retail sector, and the Mediterranean passion for urban promenade. This practice was reinvented in the last

two decades, and seeing Istiklal Avenue in Istanbul with hundreds of thousands of pedestrians dedicating themselves to promenade, from morning to night, is a sign of this rebirth after decades of decay. Such avenues are definitely part of a renewed Mediterranean urbanity (Sema Kubat 2001), and Istiklal Avenue's equivalents in other cities of the Mediterranean, from Athens to Thessaloniki or Florence to Marseilles, are the sign of the positive interaction between one of the few truly Mediterranean anthropological constants, urban promenade, and a practice of urban renovation. In general, in Mediterranean metropolises, policies have tended during the last two decades toward a transformation of public space in which the values of such spaces are emphasized and in which the space given to cars, their circulation, and their parking has been reduced, with the result of resurrecting some characters of Mediterranean urbanity.

Recent trends in urban renovation and renewal in Mediterranean cities have also led to a genuine rediscovery of waterfronts. Paradoxically indeed, many Mediterranean cities had been cut off from their contact with the sea by the constitution of harbors as spatial enclaves between the nineteenth and the end of the twentieth centuries. With the decline of port industrial zones, many cities had the occasion to reclaim their seaside. Here again, Barcelona has been an example, with the invention of a Mediterranean version of waterfront urbanism. This reopening of Mediterranean cities toward the sea has spread throughout the region and has become a central feature in planning (Cattedra 2011). Waterfronts have even become tools of metropolitan image and Mediterraneanism (Rodrigues-Malta 2004). But if they facilitate the rebirth of urbanity, as they open downtowns toward the maritime horizon and landscape, they also pose new challenges to this urbanity, as they sometimes were given urban forms in contradiction with the Mediterranean heritage. Condo living, for example, is not necessarily a Mediterranean tradition. Debates about the seafront in Beirut illustrate the risk of a morphological juxtaposition whose effect on the urban landscape could be devastating (Fawaz and Krijnen 2010).

This also poses the question of mega-urban projects in contemporary Mediterranean metropolises and of their relation to a possible Dubai paradigm. Of course, many such projects were partially designed before the arrival of investors from the Gulf. In Algiers, the most prominent projects in this regard date back to the *Grand Projet Urbain* of 1988 (Zitoun 2010) and the Berges du Lac project in Tunis also answers to logics more complex than just the importation of a new model (Barthel 2006). The Dubai paradigm, however, constitutes a true challenge to the urban form as previously conceived in the Mediterranean (Stanley 2003). Even if the extent of the Dubai effect is to be relativized (Barthel 2010), projects responding to a such logic constitute exceptions to the usual urban regime and fabric of the region, with a leading role for holdings based in Gulf capitals and a new conception of the urban soil and of its link to the historical dimension of urbanism and urbanity (Barthel 2008). The Dubai model also brought to the Mediterranean new professional practices, with a new role for architects, a new conception of planning, and a new relationship between investors, planners, and policymakers (Souami and Verdeil 2006). Of course, the global crisis partially stopped the spread of the model (Bloch 2010; Barthel 2010), and true duplicates are rare and often affected by redimensionings and delays (sometimes even cancellations) which deeply altered initial ideas: Tunis Sport-City, by Bukhatir Group, modeled on Dubai Sport-City, and Cairo Festival-City, modeled on Dubai's Festival-City (Barthel 2010). Things are more complex in Mediterranean cities, as studies on Beirut's Haret Hreik (Fawaz and Krijnen 2010) and Algiers (Zitoun 2010) illustrated.

But the fact remains that the conjunction of waterfront renewal and of a Dubai-style urbanism poses a strong challenge to the Mediterranean urban form. Even if target clients in the Mediterranean do not wish to live in towers, what is most potentially damaging for Mediterranean urbanity is surely the scale of the projects and the weak relationship between such conceptions of architecture and urbanism and the existing historical urban landscape. Ornamentalism can't be a satisfactory substitute. Many Mediterranean metropolises have also been affected recently by the new paradigm of shopping-mall commerce. In Istanbul, every new development has been accompanied by the opening of huge commercial malls, whose relationship to Mediterranean urbanity is also very weak (Takatli and Boyaci 1999). With this privatization of retail space — private malls being substitutes for streets and squares — there is a risk of loss of public space and of a reinforcement of tendencies toward social fragmentation. Such a risk is also present in many other trends in Mediterranean urbanism.

Social Challenges to Mediterranean Urbanity

The impact of globalization on Mediterranean cities is of course not limited to transformations in the morphology of the built environment. It has strong effects on the population and challenges existing social and governance schemes (Ribas-Mateos 2005). As far as cities are concerned, however, each of the new forms that globalization has promoted has also brought new social configurations that constitute a challenge to what was perceived as a kind of Mediterranean model of social coexistence. Of course this model is largely mythical, and patterns of segregation and planning practices aimed at separation have always existed, but the simple fact that contemporary challenges do affect the idea of this coexistence is already very telling. Research has now illustrated how the development of gated communities, of four- and five-star hotel enclaves, of office towers and condos, is a threat to coexistence, and often happens at the expense of preexisting more or less formalized urban structures whose inhabitants are subject to eviction. In Istanbul, such global urban forms have contributed to the expulsion of urban dwellers of the popular classes toward more distant peripheries and sometimes even more precarious living conditions (Keyder 2005). The same has happened, with diverse intensities, in many Mediterranean cities. Contested claims on land by international firms, or

firms connected to the international sphere, and local inhabitants have become a common feature of urban conflict (Keivani and Mattingly 2007).

This logic is also true for downtowns, as studies about the Solidere operation in Beirut have documented. Neoliberal downtowns are also, beyond the glitter of their rebirth, a threat to Mediterranean urbanity and to its essence related to a shared urban space (Summer 2006). Globalization has brought heavy fragmenting dynamics into Mediterranean cities, and trends toward social and spatial exclusion. Even the Barcelona model has been denounced for such devastating side effects (Càpel 2005, Borja 2009). Gentrification, eviction, and greater segregation are cited as common characteristics in urban renovation processes, and for such reasons, the Barcelona model has been called an impostor more than once (Delgado 2007). In extreme cases — the Mediterranean region is unfortunately rich in such configurations — recent years have also seen reinforcement of the prevalence of violent urban frontiers, giving credence to the condemnation of splintering trends in urbanism (Graham and Marvin 2001) or to fears of a new urban great divide (Elsheshtawy 2011). Landscapes marked by fences are more common (Gold and Revill 2000), and many cities of the Mediterranean are more or less literally living under siege (Graham 2010) or are divided by communal barriers (Silver 2010). In a city like Jerusalem, one of the most extreme examples of loss of Mediterranean urbanity, the planning of segregation, annexation, and eviction at the scale of the metropolitan region has been denounced by many activists and researchers (Yiftachel 1997), as well as the effects of the new wall on what was left of shared urbanity (Chiodelli 2012). Many cities of the region are affected by a tendency toward urban polarization. But even in less extreme cases, gentrification seems to be one of the most common results of recent urban policies, with its share of evictions and social homogenization. Research about Mediterranean cities has, however, also highlighted the existence of innovative forms of protest that relate to the civic dynamism of the Mediterranean. From the Roma neighborhood of Sulukulu in Istanbul (Uysal 2012) to different forms of protest against megaprojects in Arab cities (Barthel 2010, Navez-Bouchanine 2012) or gentrification in downtown Naples and Barcelona, mobilization in the Mediterranean has followed a path that, beyond the differences between those contexts, only the strength of urbanity make possible.

Urban growth and globalization also have represented a challenge to urban and metropolitan governance in Mediterranean cities. Research has illustrated how municipal patronage and urban growth by speculation were intimately related. Naples and Marseilles are the most studied examples (Mattina 2007, Morel 1999), but such urban regimes are found in many other cities of the region. With urban growth, the relationship between inhabitants and the sphere of governance has changed in both nature and scale. What research has documented for the last few decades is a renewal in the relationship between local party politics, urban society, and space, the urban integration of the old and new peripheries having happened through networks of patronage. This process is not of course an exclusively Mediterranean characteristic: community and factional patronage is also at the root of American local democracy (Erie 1990). In Mediterranean cities since the Middle Ages, local governance was conducted through patronage relationships between urban factions and notables. In more recent times, such a pact knew many variations, but always with the result of confirming the importance of municipal patronage, as studies about Palermo (Maccaglia 2009) and Naples have illustrated. Big cities of the regions seem to be the theater for the development of new trends in political patronage in which Islamic conservatism plays a key role, from Cairo or the Greater Istanbul municipality and local municipal districts in the Turkish metropolis (Heper 1989) to the case of Beirut (Harb 2010). The task is to understand whether such trends illustrate a risk in the rise of a kind of fundamentalist city (Alsayyad and Massoumi 2011) or just represent new forms of a traditional relationship between governance and society in the Mediterranean.

Conclusion

In the age of globalization, and specifically the present global crisis, metropolises of the Mediterranean are the object of various influxes in urban change that challenge the very urbanity that they materialized. Yet paradoxically, we are also witnessing a kind of Mediterranean revival, with Mediterraneanism used as a branding tool by cities to reinforce their images on the global scene. The example of Marseilles, with the Mediterraneanization of cultural projects for the city, has been extensively studied (Bullen 2012). Mediterraneanism is also used as a tool of place marketing outside of the Mediterranean region (in the Gulf, for example) as a sign of its vitality. However, the complex extension of the Mediterranean place marketing has reached the limits of the top-down vision of identity making within the frameworks of networked branding (Muniz Martinez 2012). They invite the insertion of judgments about what is happening in the Mediterranean in the context of tensions between global influxes and local practices or accommodations — the only real stake for researchers being that of unpacking discourses and shedding light on actual transformations, their causes, and their consequences.

If studies on Mediterranean cities do make the region a laboratory for understanding the impact of new trends on old cities, there is also the question whether the Mediterranean of today has retained something of its historically proven capacity to be innovative in urbanity. Is the sustainable city of tomorrow going to be invented in the Mediterranean (McDonogh 2011)? Will Mediterranean urbanity and the strength of the civic sphere help counter trends toward segregation? In his 2010 essay on what makes great city, Savitch listed currency, cosmopolitanism, concentration, and charisma as the four most necessary features (Savitch 2010). Currency might be lacking in present Mediterranean metropolises; cosmopolitanism might be more past than present; concentration might be challenged by urban sprawl; and charisma might be reduced to advertising flyers

for tourists. But there are other signs, less tangible maybe, which could invite one to still have faith in the strength of Mediterranean urbanity. Let me cite just one, totally anecdotal, but so telling. The Warner Village in the surroundings of Rome is a totally fake cityscape built along the motorway to the airport, the result of the conjunction of international capital, local speculation, and the consequences on urban leisure of the closure of downtown to cars for inhabitants of the periphery. On the fake Mediterranean piazza at the center of the resort, however, urban life is as real as on Campo de' Fiori, a sign that people can carry urbanity and its values with them.

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Denis Bocquet is a researcher with Ecole des Ponts (ParisTech/LATTS). He studied history and town planning (Ecole normale supérieure de Fontenay/Saint-Cloud and Paris I Sorbonne University). He graduated in 2002 from Aix-Marseille I University (Mediterranean Urban Studies) with a work on Rome (*Rome Ville Technique*, 2007). He has worked on the urban history of several Mediterranean cities, as well as contemporary urban trends in the region. He guest-edited, with Filippo De Pieri, a special issue of the journal *Storia Urbana* (2005) on the roots of illegal urbanism in Mediterranean cities. He taught Urban Studies, Urban History, and Mediterranean Studies in Aix-en-Provence (Aix-Marseille I), Dresden (TU), and now Paris (Ecole des Ponts).

With Nora Lafi, he founded H-Mediterranean (H-Net, Michigan State University) in 2001 and still serves as editor of this list. Bocquet is a member of the advisory board of the Urban and Regional Policy Program of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the SITI Research Centre (Politecnico di Torino/Compagnia di San Paolo), and the UrbanGrad Program (Technische Universität Darmstadt). At Ecole des Ponts in Paris, he manages the program on Mediterranean metropolises of the "Chaire Ville."